

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PA-01 H-01
SSM-03 SSO-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
SP-02 SIG-01 MMO-01 /065 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MR. NEUMANN
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----098693 100100Z /75

O 092352Z FEB 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR
JCS
DOD
CIA
USIA
NSC

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - FEBRUARY 9, 1978

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR FEBRUARY 9. FYI ONLY,
OFFICER PRESENT FOR THE DAY WAS TOM RESTON ASSISTED BY
JOHN TRATTNER.

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THERE IS A WAR GOING ON BETWEEN THE LEBANESE ARMY AND SYRIAN
OCCUPATION FORCES.

U.S. POLICY, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, IN LEBANON HAS AT LEAST
HAD TWO MAIN STRANDS AND ONE WAS TO ASSERT ITS SUPPORT FOR
THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON AND,
SECONDLY, TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE ARMY, ITS RECONSTRUCTION,
TO GIVE IT ECONOMIC AID, TO TRY TO REBUILD IT AS A STABILI-
ZING FORCE. AGAINST THAT BACKDROP, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT
YOU HAVE TO SAY TODAY ABOUT THE SITUATION IN LEBANON AND
WHAT YOU MIGHT BE DOING ABOUT IT, IF ANYTHING?

A. AS TO EXACTLY WHAT IS GOING ON ON THE GROUND, THE
SITUATION REMAINS UNCLEAR FROM THE REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED

AND I DO NOT HAVE A DETAILED READ-OUT FOR YOU. BUT
OBVIOUSLY THIS FIGHTING IS A VERY SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT.
WE ARE WATCHING THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND HAVE BEEN IN
TOUCH WITH THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS ON THE SCENE. WE
HOPE THAT THE SHOOTING WILL STOP AND DEEPLY REGRET THE
NEEDLESS LOSS OF LIFE AND DISRUPTION OF INTERNAL SECURITY
IN LEBANON.

Q. YOUR ANALYSIS OR THE REPORTS YOU HAVE OR WHATEVER, WHO
IS FIGHTING?

A. AS I SAY, ACTUALLY WHAT IS GOING ON ON THE GROUND THERE REMAINS UNCLEAR FROM THE REPORTS WHICH WE HAVE. I DON'T HAVE A DETAILED READ-OUT AS TO WHO IS FIGHTING OR LEVELS OF CASUALTIES OR WHERE INDEED IT IS GOING ON.

Q. SURE. BUT IS IT THE US ESTIMATE OR ANALYSIS THAT THE FIGHT IS BASICALLY BETWEEN THE LEBANESE ARMY OF MIXED MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN COMPOSITION AND SYRIAN OCCUPATION FORCES OR IS IT PRIVATE CHRISTIAN ARMIES AGAINST THE SYRIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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OR THE PALESTINIANS? JUST IN A BASIC OUTLINE WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

A. WELL, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT FOR YOU HERE. I DON'T HAVE A CHARACTERIZATION OF WHICH GROUPS ARE FIGHTING WHICH GROUPS.

Q. HOW CAN YOU SAY WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH OFFICIALS ON THE SCENE AND NOT BE ABLE TO TELL US WHO YOU ARE IN TOUCH WITH? WHO ARE THE OFFICIALS? ARE THEY THE SYRIANS OR DO YOU MEAN THE LEBANESE OFFICIALS?

A. THE WORDING I HAVE HERE IS RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS. NOW, WITH REGARD TO THE SYRIANS, WE HAVE HAD DISCUSSIONS IN DAMASCUS, BUT I HAVE NOTHING ON THESE DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES TO OFFER YOU.

Q. ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH ISRAEL ON THE NEW OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING IN LEBANON?

A. I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION.

Q. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE FIGHTING IN THE SOUTH?

A. I HAVE JUST READ YOU EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON.

Q. WHAT ABOUT GEOGRAPHY ? I MEAN IS IT BEIRUT OR IS IT IN THE SOUTH OR IS IT IN BOTH PLACES?

A. I JUST SAID THAT IT IS UNCLEAR AND I DON'T HAVE A CHARACTERIZATION FOR YOU OF WHO IS FIGHTING OR WHERE THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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FIGHTING IS GOING ON OR LEVELS OF CASUALTIES.

Q. YOU MEAN YOU HAVEN'T BEEN READING THE REPORTS ON THE WIRES.

A. I AM TALKING ABOUT INFORMATION WHICH WE RECEIVE THROUGH OUR SOURCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Q. SO, YOUR INFORMATION DOESN'T TELL YOU THE LOCATION OF THE FIGHTING NOR WHO IS INVOLVED?

A. I DON'T HAVE THAT FOR YOU. I AM SORRY.

Q. ARE WE IN TOUCH WITH THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS ON THE SCENE IN BEIRUT OR WHERE?

A. WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS IN LEBANON AND WE HAVE ALSO HAD DISCUSSIONS IN DAMASCUS.

Q. WILL YOU BE ABLE TO TELL US, SAY THIS AFTERNOON OR AT LEAST TOMORROW, AS TO WHAT OFFICIALS WE HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH AND WHERE AND WHAT WE HAVE BEEN SAYING TO THEM, IN EFFECT?

A. I WILL CHECK THAT. I AM NOT SURE I CAN GET YOU AN ANSWER TO THAT. BUT I WILL CHECK THAT.

Q. DID SECRETARY VANCE SEE A TEXT OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S PRESS CLUB SPEECH IN ADVANCE AND, IF HE DID, DID HE APPROVE IT?

A. YES. HE DID SEE A TEXT. AS A COURTESY WE WERE PROVIDED AN ADVANCE TEXT OF HIS SPEECH, BUT WE WERE NOT ASKED TO GIVE OUR APPROVAL AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN INAPPROPRIATE THAT WE DO SO.

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Q. DID HE SUGGEST ANY CHANGES IN THE SPEECH?

A. I DON'T THINK I HAVE ANYTHING OFFICIAL TO SAY ON THE RECORD ABOUT THAT.

(BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) ON BACKGROUND. Q. DID HE GIVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SPEECH? (END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

A. I CAN TELL YOU THAT HE DID MAKE SOME SUGGESTIONS. I AM GOING BACK ON THE RECORD NOW. BUT BEYOND THAT YOU REALLY SHOULD ADDRESS THE EGYPTIANS WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WENT INTO THIS OR THAT FORMULATION IN THE SPEECH.

(BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Q. WHEN YOU SAID HE MADE

SOME SUGGESTIONS, IF YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO BACKGROUND --
WAS THAT BEFORE OR AFTER THE TEXT WAS SHOWN TO THE STATE
DEPARTMENT AS A COURTESY, IF YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW?

A. I THINK AFTER HE HAD SEEN THE TEXT.

Q. WILL, SOMETIMES YOU CAN MAKE SUGGESTIONS ABOUT WHAT A
MAN MIGHT SAY BEFORE YOU SEE HIS TEXT.

A. THE INFORMATION I HAVE, ON BACKGROUND, IS THAT IT WAS
AFTER HE HAD SEEN A TEXT OF THE PROPOSED SPEECH.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US WHEN THIS TOOK PLACE? DID HE SEE IT
OVER THE WEEKEND?

A. NO. I CAN'T. I AM SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHEN.

Q. WAS THE TEXT MODIFIED AS A RESULT OF THE SUGGESTIONS?
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A. I AM NOT SURE OF THAT.

Q. IS THERE ANY WAY WE CAN FIND THIS OUT? THIS SEEMS TO
BE AN INTERESTING POINT HERE.

A. I WILL TAKE THE QUESTION.

Q. WAS THE SPEECH AS ORIGINALLY SHOWN TO HIM THE SAME AS
WAS DELIVERED?

A. LET ME TAKE THAT QUESTION NOW I AM ON THE RECORD
AGAIN (END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) (RESUME UNCLASSIFIED)

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER TRAVEL PLANS FOR ROY ATHERTON
OR FOR PRIME MINISTER BEGIN?

A. I AM SORRY. I DO NOT.

Q. FOR MR. BEGIN?

A. NO. I HAVE NOTHING ON THAT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE A TIME FOR DAYAN TO SEE THE SECRETARY?

A. FEBRUARY 16TH HERE.

Q. IS THERE GOING TO BE A DAYAN VISIT TO THE WHITE HOUSE,
AS FAR AS YOU KNOW?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

MR. TRATTNER: THERE IS SOME INFORMATION ON ROY'S TRAVEL. HE WENT TO NEW YORK THIS MORNING, I THINK ABOUT 9:00. HE SAW DAYAN. I CAN'T SAY WHEN OR WHERE, FOR HOW LONG OR WHERE, AND I UNDERSTAND HE IS NOW ON HIS WAY BACK FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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OTHER ACTIVITIES THIS AFTERNOON NOT RELATED TO DAYAN.

Q. YESTERDAY MR. DAYAN MADE A STATEMENT ABOUT ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS POLICY IN WHICH HE SAID THAT ISRAEL OR HE HAD ASSURED THE PRESIDENT THAT ISRAEL WOULDN'T SET UP SETTLEMENTS, I GUESS FOR A PERIOD OF A YEAR. I THINK HE WAS SAYING THEY WOULD RESTRICT THEMSELVES TO MILITARY SETTLEMENTS FOR A YEAR. DOES THIS END THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL OVER THAT ASPECT OF THE SETTLEMENTS QUESTION OR DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO WHAT HE SAID?

MR. RESTON: YES. I DO HAVE A REACTION TO WHAT MR. DAYAN SAID IN NEW YORK YESTERDAY. WE HAVE MADE OUR POSITION ON THIS ISSUE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR. THE PRESIDENT HAS ADDRESSED THE QUESTION IN HIS TWO MOST RECENT PRESS CONFERENCES AND OUR POSITION WAS RE-STATED ONLY YESTERDAY IN THE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT. ADDITIONALLY WE ISSUED TWO DAYS AGO THE CHRONOLOGY ON OUR EXCHANGES WITH THE ISRAELIS. AND I HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY SAID.

Q. THAT DOESN'T DEAL WITH THE SPECIFIC QUESTION THOUGH. THE FLAP LAST WEEK HAD TO DO WITH WHETHER DAYAN HAD GIVEN US A ONE YEAR PROMISE OR A FEW MONTHS PROMISE AND HE SAID IN THE KNESSET LAST WEDNESDAY, A WEEK AGO, THAT IT WAS A FEW MONTHS, ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL THAT DISTRIBUTED THE TEXT OF WHAT HE SAID IN THE KNESSET. YESTERDAY HE SAID IN NEW YORK IT WAS A ONE YEAR PROMISE. NOW, WE WERE EARLIER INSISTING IT WAS A ONE YEAR PROMISE. HE NOW SEEMS TO BE COMING AROUND TO THE AMERICAN POSITION AND, THEREFORE, THE QUESTION YOU WERE JUST ASKED WAS WHETHER THE UNITED STATES FEELS THAT THIS NOW ENDS THAT PARTICULAR FLAP?

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A. I HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO THAT FROM WHAT I HAVE SAID. I AM SORRY.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT RABBI SCHINDLER WHO SAW THE PRESIDENT LAST NIGHT SAID ON THE RECORD TO CORRESPONDENTS LAST NIGHT THAT HE WAS TOLD BY THE PRESIDENT THAT THE WHOLE CONTROVERSY STEMS FROM WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID

WAS A MISTAKEN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WAS SAID. IS THAT THE VERSION THAT YOU WOULD SUPPORT?

A. I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON IT; WHAT THE RABBI MIGHT HAVE SAID.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ON THE REPORTED SALE BY FRANCE OF ANTITANK MISSILES TO SYRIA? THE ISRAELIS HAVE COMPLAINED ABOUT THIS.

A. NO.

Q. YOU ARE NOT AWARE OF THAT PARTICULAR SALE?

A. I AM NOT, NO.

Q. COULD YOU LOOK INTO THAT?

A. YES. I WILL LOOK INTO THAT.

Q. ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY NEW MILITARY SUPPLIES TO SYRIA OF ANY SOURCE?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON MILITARY SUPPLIES TO SYRIA.

Q. IS THERE A DECISION ON THE PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO SELL MILITARY HARDWARE TO EGYPT?

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A. NO DECISION HAS BEEN REACHED.

Q. TOM, SINCE MR. ATHERTON IS SEEING MR. DAYAN OR SAW HIM ALREADY THIS MORNING AND IS ON HIS WAY BACK, DO YOU THINK WE CAN GET SOMETHING CLEARLY FROM YOUR OFFICE LATER THIS AFTERNOON AS TO JUST WHERE WE DO STAND ON THIS MATTER OF THE SETTLEMENTS IN VIEW OF THE CONFLICT HERE, AND APPARENTLY IN THE POSITIONS -- I MEAN "POSITIONS" IN THE TERMS OF WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN SAYING, IN TERMS OF CHRONOLOGY ETCETERA -- WHAT WENT ON BEFORE -- AND WHAT THE PRESIDENT APPARENTLY SAID LAST NIGHT.

A. THERE IS NO CONFLICT BETWEEN WHAT THE PRESIDENT MAY HAVE SAID LAST NIGHT AND WHAT I AM SAYING NOW, BECAUSE I AM NOT REALLY SAYING ANYTHING NOW. BUT WE WILL TRY. I TOOK THAT QUESTION AND WE WILL TRY TO GET YOU AN ANSWER.

Q. THERE HAS BEEN A SUGGESTION IN SOME NEWS REPORTS THIS MORNING THAT THE TIMING OF THE RELEASE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS HAD SOME SIGNIFICANCE TO DO WITH THE SADAT VISIT, OR THE SETTLEMENT OF A POLICY -- WOULD YOU CLARIFY THE

RECORD? -

A. I WILL DENY IT.

VANCE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

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